BRITISH COLUMBIA The Best Place on Earth | Ministry of Education | EDUCATION REPORT

Issue No. 33

In The News

Mission School District Signs Aboriginal Agreement

Chilliwack StrongStart BC Centre Open for Preschoolers

English Language Skills Training Expanded

Nanaimo StrongStart BC Centres Open for Preschoolers

Ruth King StrongStart BC Centres Open for Preschoolers

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Message from Minister Shirley Bond

Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Education

British Columbia's great goals include making B.C. the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent and leading the world in sustainable environmental management. Building new schools with the environment in mind supports our commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 33 per cent by 2020. But we're also ensuring students gain an appreciation for the environment in the classroom, and we have even included an environmental awareness category in the Premier's Awards for Teaching Excellence.

The new B.C. Green Schools program features the B.C. Green Schools Eco Kit, which includes an idea book full of possible projects, such as establishing composting or recycling programs, tending a garden, or cleaning a pond. The Province is offering schools an opportunity to participate by providing one eco kit per school, or a higher-level kit for schools already involved. These eco kits will help schools model the best environmental practices and ensure that their students learn about environmental responsibility.

Similarly the Province has produced a new guide for teachers with suggestions on how sustainability can be incorporated in almost all subjects and at all grade levels.

Government is taking action to achieve more in education and reduce the weight of our collective footprint on the environment. With the success of the B.C. Green Schools program, our great goals will be within reach. Please read more and order a B.C. Green Schools Eco Kit.

Province Encourages Play for All Kids

The Province is investing $2.5 million in a program that will help create accessible or barrier-free play spaces throughout British Columbia. The program, called Let's Play, is a partnership with the Rick Hansen Foundation, which will distribute grants to schools, municipalities, and other qualified community organizations whose applications are successful. Read more.

Minister Bond joins students at the accessible play space at Manoah Steves elementary in Richmond, October 26, 2007.

HOT TOPIC

Recently, the Province adjusted the funding formula to correct an anomaly in the system that allowed districts to receive double administrative funding for students taking less than a full course load. For example, while eight courses are considered a full course load, full funding was being provided for students taking as few as four courses.

The government's funding changes are based on important principles of equity and fairness. We're taking steps to ensure that those dollars are directed where they are most needed, towards improving student achievement through programs like the increasingly popular distributed learning.

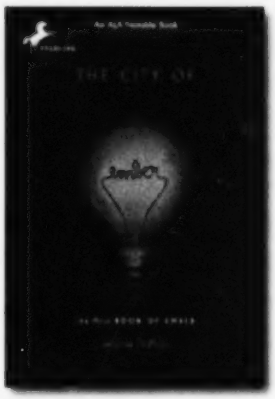
In March, we committed $4.345 billion in operating grants to school districts and this funding remains the same. This funding includes a $116 million increase this year alone. Every dollar we committed to provide to school districts is remaining in the school system, directed at improving learning opportunities.

I've met with board of education chairs and superintendents to provide clarity around the recent funding formula adjustment. As well, Ministry staff are following up with secretary-treasurers in school districts across the province to ensure a smooth transition.

The fundamental goal we share with school districts and teachers - improving student achievement - will be better served through these changes.

Reading Corner

The city is crumbling. And its supply of electricity and water will not last. But why? And where can the citizens of Ember go when their isolated city goes dark? In this fantastic novel, newly graduated students Lina Mayfleet and Doon Harrow make several shocking discoveries in the course of their assigned jobs. The first in a growing series of books, this title is suitable for students in grades 6-7.



The City of Ember
Jeanne Duprau